



DEVELOPMENTS

A SEMESTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PROGRAM OF STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SPS/SAHE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

SAHE FACULTY

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CO-EDITORS:

Cameron Horton ('26)

Amara Bender ('27)

Please let us know what you think about Developments. Your feedback and suggestions are welcome and greatly appreciated.



From back row to front row/left to right: Jake Starek, Sonia Yost, Amara Bender, Gabe Sikora, Jesse Gowin, Kieran Pote, Teresa Kondas, Isadora Mondesir

WELCOME CLASS OF 2027!

This year the SAHE program welcomed eight new students into the 2027 cohort. Five of the students completed their undergraduate studies at IUP, while the remaining three joined us from other institutions - two from Seton Hill University and one from PennWest Edinboro.

To support our students in their transition to graduate school, the SAHE faculty and Associates for Student Development (ASD) organized several events. Before classes began, ASD hosted a campus tour to help students become familiar with campus buildings and connect with cohort peers and ASD members. During the first week of classes they also held a Kick-Off Lunch, providing additional opportunities to build relationships, meet the SAHE faculty and learn more about both ASD and the SAHE program as a whole.

Throughout the semester, the faculty hosted two "Student Success Sessions" The first session focused on the transition into graduate school, featuring presentations by Dr. Mimi Benjamin (SAHE faculty) and Dr. Amber Racchini (Vice Provost for Academic Success). The second session highlighted the SAHE experience and future pathways, with Dr. John Wesley Lowery (SAHE program coordinator and faculty) discussing the curriculum, Navigator Brett Berquist sharing available resources, and Dr. Luke Faust (department chair of Student Affairs, Student Success, and Disability Access) exploring the evolution of SAHE students throughout the program and beyond.

The class of 2027 has been busy this semester with classes and assistantships which include sites such as IUP's Housing Office, IUP's Career and Professional Development Center, IUP's Office of International Education, IUP's Department for Disability Access and Advising, IUP's Office of Student Leadership and UPJ's Housing Office. We are excited to see where their journeys take them!

Coordinator's Corner	pg. 2
Dr. Mimi Benjamin	pg. 3
Class of 2025	pg. 4
Banquet Awards	pg. 5
Alumni Updates	pg. 6-8
Alumni Advice	pg. 9
ASD	pg. 10
Newkerk Scholarship	pg. 11
Get Involved! Award	pg. 12
Gratitude Go 'Round	pg. 13-14
Fall Semester Highlights	pg. 15
SAHE Alumni Inspire	pg. 16
Note from the Editors	pg. 17

DR. JOHN WESLEY LOWERY

Coordinator's Corner



Greetings from Stouffer Hall where things remain very busy in SAHE. I continue to serve as the SAHE Graduate Coordinator and Assistant Chair of our new department. I am also actively involved in APSCUF, the faculty union, as a member of the Meet-and-Discuss Team which meets with Management on a monthly basis. I am also IUP's representative to the PASSHE Faculty Council and in this role also serve as the faculty liaison to IUP's Council of Trustees which has offered unique new insights into the university's governance.

We are settling into our new organizational home within the Department of Student Affairs, Student Success, and Disability Access in the University College. Our offices are still located on the second floor of Stouffer Hall and we do not yet know when we might move across campus. As a result of this reorganization, Mimi and I both picked up an advising load of incoming college freshmen and sophomores which has changed the trajectory of our Octobers. Beyond having a little bit more trouble scheduling appointments with us in recent weeks, the impact of the reorganization remains minimal for SAHE students.

In light of all that is happening at the federal level, I have been busy this semester speaking at several conferences. In October, I was the opening keynote speaker at the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA) and the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA) joint annual conference in Baltimore. It was great to see a number of SAHE alumni from across the years at the conference. In December, I will be traveling to Mississippi State University to serve as a featured speaker for the MSU Legal Issues Conference.

As I look forward to the spring, I am excited to attend ASCA in Arlington, Virginia and NASPA in Kansas City. I will be presenting a legislative and public policy update at ASCA again this year. In my role as NASPA Historian, I will be presenting with colleagues on the evolution of NASPA's organizational structures around functional areas and identities. We will be hosting an informal reception at NASPA with the Division of Student Affairs and we will share more information about the reception early next year. I hope to connect with SAHE alumni at both conferences.

Ute continues to enjoy her work with the University of Michigan's Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. She was recently promoted to Senior Award Management Officer.

Margaret, our daughter who many alumni have met over the past 17 years, is now a college senior at the University of South Carolina. We were able to visit her recently and she continues to thrive at USC. She is on the Executive Board for Dance Marathon, works in undergraduate admissions, is a returning peer leader for University 101, and is volunteering at the Children's Hospital. She is currently in the midst of applying for medical school as she plans the next steps in her academic journey.

I want to thank the many SAHE alumni who continue to encourage their students to consider the IUP SAHE Program when exploring their graduate school options. Please continue to send us your students.

Warmly,
John Wesley Lowery
Professor and SAHE Graduate Coordinator

DR. MIMI BENJAMIN



Mimi with niece and IUP first-year student, Sophie Benjamin

As I write this at the end of Week 9, I'm once again wondering where the time, and the warmth, have gone. Fall has shifted pretty quickly, from temperatures in the 70s and 80s one minute to frost and freeze warnings that wiped out my flowers. Sometimes it takes me a while to admit that the summer has ended. I hope that you had a good summer and that the fall is treating you well.

Summer is a bit of a blur at this time of year. My summer was spent helping my parents move into assisted living and cleaning out my childhood home to put it on the market. I have three terrific brothers, and we worked together to take care of all that was involved. We laughed a lot in the process and are grateful to have our parents comfortably settled into their new living environment, which is kind of like a residence hall for the elderly!

This has been a year of big changes for me at IUP, too. First, I'm teaching the First Learning Year course, a new first-year experience seminar that all new students take. I have two sections, each with 43 students. I know; those of you familiar with these kinds of courses are probably shaking your heads at those numbers for this kind of class, but we have to do the best with what we have. What I have that none of my colleagues do is two great SAHE practicum students who are co-teaching with me. Hunter Bash ('26) and Tristan Pfeiffer ('26) have been invaluable in this process. One thing is for sure - I've learned a lot about what current undergraduates do and experience. They've certainly taught me a few things, some I wish I didn't have to learn (like the specifics of the Academic Integrity Policy!).

Another change for me that's been really fun is having my niece, Sophie, here at IUP. She's a first-year student studying sport management, and she's a delight. While I don't run into her much on campus, we do catch up for coffee, lunch and dinner as often as we can. It's nice to think about having her around for the next three and a half years.

This semester included a bit of travel for work, first to Kansas City, MO and then to Ames, IA. My role on the NASPA 2026 Conference Leadership Committee took me to KC for planning meetings and program selection.

The group that I'm working with on the CLC is amazing. Ames hosted the National Learning Communities Conference, for which I served as the keynote speaker. Since I spent 10 years of my career in Ames and earned my Ph.D. from Iowa State University, it was a nice opportunity to "go home," which was the focus of my speech.

As we wrap up the fall semester, I wish you well in all you're doing. It's always wonderful to hear from alums and learn about new jobs, marriages, children and life successes. Please do keep in touch, and feel free to "come home" to IUP when you get a chance.

CLASS OF 2025

Where Are They Now?



From back row to front row/left to right: Cooper Hicks, Mattie Updyke, Alexis Jardine, Aicha Bellaoucha, Madeleine Robinson, Felix Akomeah, Kaitlyn Kerr, Jorge Tapia Becerril

Aicha Bellaoucha

Coordinator of Academic Success & NCAA Compliance, Arcadia University

Alexis Jardine

Attending a PhD program in Higher Education at Liberty University

Cooper Hicks

Residence Life Coordinator University of North Florida

Felix Akomeah

Missouri Department of Corrections

Jorge Tapia Becerril

Attending Widener Delaware Law School and works at West Chester with the role of Residence Hall Coordinator

Kaitlyn Kerr

Accommodations Coordinator at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA

Madeleine Robinson

Assistant Director of Residence Life, Cedar Crest College

Mattie Updyke

Residential Education Director with Washington State University in Pullman, WA

STUDENTS & ALU AT SAHE B



Left to right: Dr. Mimi Benjamin and Mattie Updyke



Left to right: Katie Motycki and Dr. John Wesley Lowery

The Student Affairs in Higher Education program honored graduating students and recognized a graduate and an alumna for exceptional accomplishments and contributions as part of the department's annual banquet on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, coordinated by Associates for Student Development.

Award recipients recognized at this year's banquet included Mattie Updyke as the Outstanding Scholar for academic achievement and ability to enhance the learning environment for their colleagues, as well as the S. Trevor Hadley Outstanding Student Scholarship Award recipient for academic accomplishments and significant service to campus and professional communities. The Hadley Award recognizes the overall best-graduating student in the SAHE program.

Also recognized at the banquet was Katie Motycki (SAHE Class of 2004), who is the 2025 recipient of the Ronald Lunardini Distinguished Alumni Award. Motycki announced that she had decided to support students attending professional conferences during the upcoming year with her award from the Ron and Peggy Lunardini Fund.

At the banquet, Jorge L. Tapia Becerril delivered the student address on behalf of the Class of 2025. Since 2001, a student has been selected to speak on behalf of the graduating students. This speech originally took place at the departmental graduation ceremony and in recent years has been made at the banquet.

The Department of Student Affairs in Higher Education students, faculty, and alumni are proud of and congratulate our honorees and the entire SAHE Class of 2025!

ALUMNI UPDATES

Prince Atsise '24

- Assistant Director of Housing Operations, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (New Mexico Tech)
- Founder & Executive Director, Value for All Foundation
- Published peer-reviewed article in the East African Journal of Information Technology
- Winner, 2024 Case Study Competition at the Association of
- He is currently pursuing a Graduate Certificate in Cybersecurity from New Mexico Tech alongside a Ph.D. in Leadership with a concentration in Information Systems at the University of the Cumberland, Kentucky.

Madison Forbes '24

- Student Success Coach at Stevenson University

Bethany Jacobs '24

- Career Counselor - University of South Florida, Bellini Center for Talent Development
- After graduation, she worked as a recruiter in Pittsburgh.
- She recently moved to Tampa, Florida.

Ally Keller '22

- Moved from Program Coordinator -> Assistant Director for Leadership & PHC
- Awarded Advisor of the year at LSU awards ceremony

Sarah Avery '20

- Academic Advisor, Information Systems, Carnegie Mellon University
- She presented at NACADA in Las Vegas on October 26. Her presentation is titled: Mindfulness and Metacognition, Wellbeing Strategies for Educators and Students.
- She also started her own coaching and public speaking business: Serendipitously Well.

Anna Borges '20

- Associate Director of Student Engagement at The Catholic University of America

Angela Delfine-Mechler '19

- Site Director at Per Scholas Pittsburgh

Kaitlyn Martin '19

- Director of Annual Programs & Digital Automations - Sigma Chi Foundation

ALUMNI UPDATES

Anthony Nguyen '19

- Student Life & Housing Advisor, George Brown College & Part Time Professor, Conestoga College
- Presented at the Student Leadership Conference: Humanizing Leadership in the Digital Age at George Brown College in Feb 2025.
- Volunteered at the NAFSA Annual Conference & Expo in May 2025.

Jhane Ruiz '18

- Staff Accountant
- She left higher education to pursue a new field.

Carmine Biancamano '16

- Navigate360 Operations Coordinator & Class Advisor, Gettysburg College

Lexie Elliott '14

- She was elected as the 2026 Spring Summits Chair for AHEPPP: Family Engagement in Higher Education.
 - In this national leadership role, she will guide the planning committee to design and deliver impactful virtual programming that fosters connection and collaboration across the field.

Accessibility Coordinator - University of Pittsburgh

He was nominated to serve on the IUP Alumni Association Board of Directors Executive Committee and has accepted the role of Secretary.

Jennifer Pruzinsky '08

- Graduate Recruitment Coordinator - Brown University

He recently earned a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership degree from the University of the Cumberlands.

Dissertation: "Pathways to Departure: Examining the Relationship between Burnout and Turnover Intention among Student Affairs Practitioners at Osteopathic Medical Schools in the United States."

ALUMNI UPDATES

Darlene (Beherns) Lupe-Gotham '06

- Finance Administrator/Bookkeeper
- She found her perfect "fit" after leaving higher education.

Dr. Scott Mattingly '03

- He recently joined La Salle University as Assistant Vice President for Student Success.

Dr. Kevin Bailey '90

- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, UNC Charlotte
- Received the 2025 Dr. Kent Gardner Award from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA).

GIVING TO SAHE

The Nancy Newkerk Scholarship - Awarded to a second-year master's student whose contributions during the first year of their program demonstrated the greatest promise for the profession of student affairs. (Acct #0374)

The Hadley Outstanding Student - established to recognize outstanding 2nd year students on the basis of academic performance and professional involvement in the SAHE program. (Acct #0140)

The SAHE Development Fund - Supports the needs of the SAHE program that are not covered by funds from the University (e.g., student support for professional development activities, research support to students, Outstanding Scholar Award, Outstanding SAHE Alumni award). (Acct # 4647)

HOW TO GIVE

1. Visit www.iup.edu/giveagift and enter the amount you wish to give.
2. Click the box labeled "Click here to view other university-wide funds or to support more than one area," Click "Other" in the "Other critical needs at IUP" and click continue.
3. Enter your amount (if this is the only gift you are giving, it will be the same as when you originally entered it and will be 100% of your gift). Finally, enter the account number where it asks to specify the designation, then complete the remainder of the form.

The Foundation for IUP is a 501(c)(3) organization; gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible as per IRS regulations. The official registration and financial information of the Foundation for Indiana University of Pennsylvania may be obtained for the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. For calls which originate outside of Pennsylvania, the telephone number is 717-785-1720. Registration does not imply endorsement

ALUMNI ADVICE

"As I continue my journey in higher education, especially working alongside students, faculty, and staff, I remind myself to stay curious, remain compassionate, and always celebrate the small wins. Those wins may be as simple as a heartfelt "thank you," a student sharing exciting news about an exam, or just being present in a meaningful moment. These simple but powerful reminders can give us the energy and purpose to keep moving forward."

~ Dr. Chad Jurica

"You are going to have a monumental impact on the students with which you work. Enjoy grad school, and do not wish the time away. Embrace the new relationships. Soak in as much information in this program as you can because it will ALL help you in your career. You are strong. You will make it through this program, and you will make a difference."

Madison Forbes

"Always prioritize yourself. It's hard to do your best work when you're not meeting your own needs"

Jhane Ruiz

"Keep your head held high and take care of yourself!"

Kelli (Thomas) Biancamano

"...networking and building strong and healthy relationships with colleagues is so important and will help you throughout all walks of life. I have always been on the quiet/shy side. Totally comfortable talking on stage in front of hundreds of students/parents, but networking with colleagues and opening up professionally to people around the university was always a struggle for me. Definitely put yourself out there and build bridges with people in various offices across campus. Make sure those bridges are sound by not taking part in gossip and always be careful about what you say and who you say it to. But if you put in the work to connect with others, it could lead to some amazing opportunities!"

Darlene Lupe-Gotham

"Remember that our work ultimately serves people. Stay curious, pursue tools and knowledge that expand your impact, and don't be afraid to bridge education with innovation."

~ Prince Atsise

"New professionals- be present in your university! Go to events, sports, etc. Become an active member of your new community! This will help you learn about your new surroundings and meet colleagues and students!"

Current SAHE students- Don't be afraid to try an area that's new to you for your practicums! Going outside my comfort zone to areas I was interested in set me up for great success in getting a job and also gave me a variety of experiences to share about in the process, plus it added to my skill set and knowledge that has aided me as a professional throughout my career thus far!"

~ Anna Borges

"Burnout is very prevalent in our field, so self-care is vital for practitioners at all career levels. Please take care of yourself and your colleagues, and advocate for policies and work cultures that recognize and value self-care. You can't light yourself on fire to keep others warm."

David Falletta

"New professionals: Ask TONS of questions, and don't be afraid to schedule a meeting with campus partners to network."

~ Ally Keller

"My advice is to follow the experiences that bring you joy! If you build your career around experiences you enjoy, you will find a fulfilling and happy life."

Sarah Avery

"Don't be afraid of taking bold steps in your career - whether that means moving to a new state, exploring a different functional area, or stepping into a role that's outside your comfort zone. Mimi often reminds us that "we can live anywhere for two years.." and it's true.

Say yes to a new environment, new university, or the new role - you might be surprised by how much you grow and what doors open because of it. Each experience serves as a stepping stone that shapes your professional journey."

~ Bethany Jacobs

ASSOCIATES FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT (ASD)

“GROWTH AND CONNECTION IN ASD”



Left to right: Hunter Bash, Cameron Horton, Meghan Lewis, Nye Hardy, Mady Oliver

This past year with the Associates for Student Development (ASD) has been one filled with collaboration, learning, and community. As a group, we’ve worked hard to plan events that not only engage our members but also support our shared mission of professional and personal development within the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) program.

One of the most meaningful events we hosted this semester was “Finding Your SAHE Why.” This session planned by Hunter Bash our VP of Professional Development, brought back several IUP SAHE alumni who shared their journeys in the field and reflected on what continues to motivate them in their work. Hearing their stories reminded us why we chose this profession and helped us reconnect with our own sense of purpose in student affairs. It was inspiring to see current students and alumni come together.

Of course, we also made time for fun and connection! Our “First-Year Kickoff” was one of my favorite social events. It was a great opportunity to welcome new members and start the year off with new experiences and excitement. Seeing the enthusiasm from both returning and first-year students reminded me of the importance of community within our program.

As we look ahead, I’m proud of how far we’ve come and grateful for everyone who contributed their time and ideas to make these events successful. ASD continues to be a space where we can grow, support one another, and celebrate the work we’re doing to make a difference in higher education.

By Meghan Lewis, *President of Associates for Student Development*

NEWKERK SCHOLARSHIP



Left to right: Tristan Pfeiffer and Abby Hancox

The Student Affairs in Higher Education program is pleased to announce Tristan Pfeiffer and Abby Hancox as the recipients of the Nancy J. Newkerk Scholarship for 2025.

Tristan is a second year student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education program and earned his bachelor's degree in English Studies from IUP. He serves as a graduate assistant in the Academic Advising Center at IUP, supporting students on academic probation and also holds a position as the Graduate Student Assistant for Occupancy and Assignments in the IUP Housing Office.

Abby, also a second year student, earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science at IUP and is pursuing dual master's degrees in both Student Affairs in Higher Education and in Public Affairs. She also serves as a graduate assistant in the Academic Advising Center at IUP, supporting students on academic probation. Additionally, Abby served as the IUP Impact 150 Campaign Graduate Student Assistant

Recommenders praised the work of these two second-year SAHE students. Tristan was described by one recommender as "insightful, organized and deeply compassionate," and as someone who does a great job guiding students through the various challenges of college. One of Abby's recommenders identified her as ". . . an emerging professional who leads with heart, integrity and purpose," noting that she centers students in her work and demonstrates a strong commitment to IUP.

Since 1999, the Nancy J. Newkerk Scholarship has been awarded to deserving second-year SAHE graduate students who demonstrate outstanding contributions to college students, student affairs activities, the SAHE program, and the broader higher education community.

Nancy Newkerk served as dean of women at IUP (then Indiana State Teachers College) from 1957 to 1967 and as associate dean of Admissions at IUP from 1978 until her retirement in 1994. She was awarded the IUP President's Medal of Distinction in 2009. She passed away in 2017.

Newkerk scholarship recipients are selected on the qualities that reflect Nancy Newkerk's own professional career in student affairs: a collaborative colleague, a student-centered practitioner, and a role model for citizenship and civic responsibility.

Tristan and Abby were presented with the award and scholarship at the SAHE program's annual Thanksgiving celebration, sponsored by Associates for Student Development, on Tuesday, November 18, 2025.

GET INVOLVED! AWARD

HARDY RECEIVES "GET INVOLVED!" AWARD



Left to right: Nye Hardy and Tom Baker

Nyekeya Hardy, a graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) program, was selected as the recipient of the "Get Involved!" SAHE Student Leadership Award. The award is presented at the end of the student's first year in the graduate program, and honors someone who is making a difference on the campus where they work and through involvement outside of work. Tom (SAHE '05), Erin, and Lila Baker offer this annual award.

Baker stated, "It was a pleasure to honor Nye this year with the award and scholarship. Her multiple nominations were impressive and I particularly found the statement that 'Nye can be spotted everywhere helping where she can' to be particularly fitting. She has been exceptionally involved in her undergraduate and graduate years and impressed me with the way she approaches being a campus and community leader. One of her nominators also said, 'Nye is the kind of person who makes sure that connections are being made and community is being built.' Nye is going to do amazing things to help others for many years to come. Congratulations Nye!"

Hardy earned a B.S. degree in Hospitality Management from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a Certificate of Completion in Culinary Arts from IUP, and an Associate's Degree in General Studies from Harrisburg Area Community College. Her graduate assistantships are with Residence Life and the Folger Student Center, both at IUP. She has held practicum experiences with Summer Conferences at the University of South Carolina and IUP's Military and Veterans Resource Center. Nye served as the 2025 Vice President of Membership and Finance for the Associates for Student Development, the SAHE student organization.

GRATITUDE GO 'ROUND

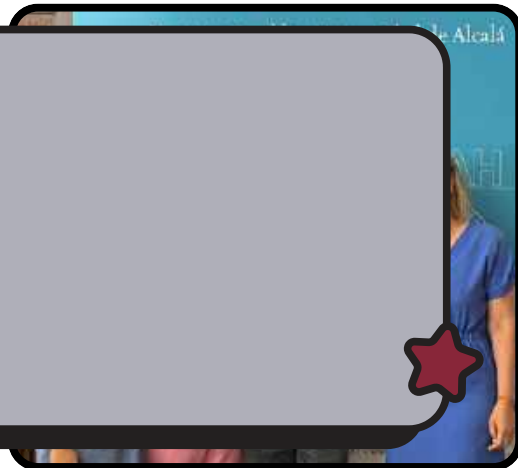
Our professor, Dr. Mimi Benjamin, consistently reminds us of the importance of expressing gratitude in everything we do. At the start of each class, she invites us to share one thing we're thankful for—an activity she affectionately calls "Gratitude Go 'Round." Inspired by Dr. Benjamin's example, we asked our fellow SAHE students to share what they are most grateful for in the program.



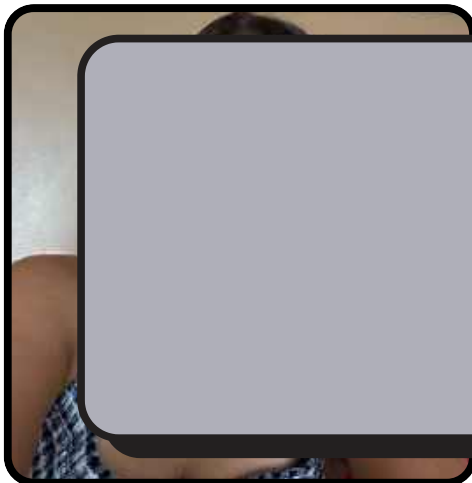
AMARA BENDER '27

"I'm grateful for the welcoming spirit of the SAHE community. The connections I've made have helped me grow and feel truly supported in my first year."

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to spend my summer practicum abroad in Spain! When I got to SAHE, second-year students told us we could do our summer practica anywhere in the country, but John helped me to expand that reach even further! It was a truly great experience and a life-long memory."



"I am grateful for my cohort and professors! My class has been such a great help when it comes to working together and getting to know one another! My professors have been so supportive and helpful which makes me feel so welcomed here in the SAHE community!"



GRATITUDE GO 'ROUND



ABIGAIL HANCOX '26

"I am beyond grateful for my assistantship and the wonderful colleagues and students I work with!"



"I am grateful to be taught by two amazing professionals in the Students Affairs field. I am also beyond grateful to be surrounded by such hardworking future professionals who push me to be my best self!"



KIERAN POTE '27

"I am grateful for the members of my cohort and those in the year above me, they have been nothing but supportive and welcoming. They have made me feel welcomed as part of the SAHE community and push me to grow everyday!"



FALL SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



ASD Pumpkin Painting Event



ASD "Finding Your SAHE Why" Event
Featuring current SAHE students and SAHE Alumni



November Murder Mystery Movie Night



**2025 ASD Eboard (back)
with 2026 ASD Eboard
Announced at SAHE Thanksgiving**

SAHE ALUMNI INSPIRE

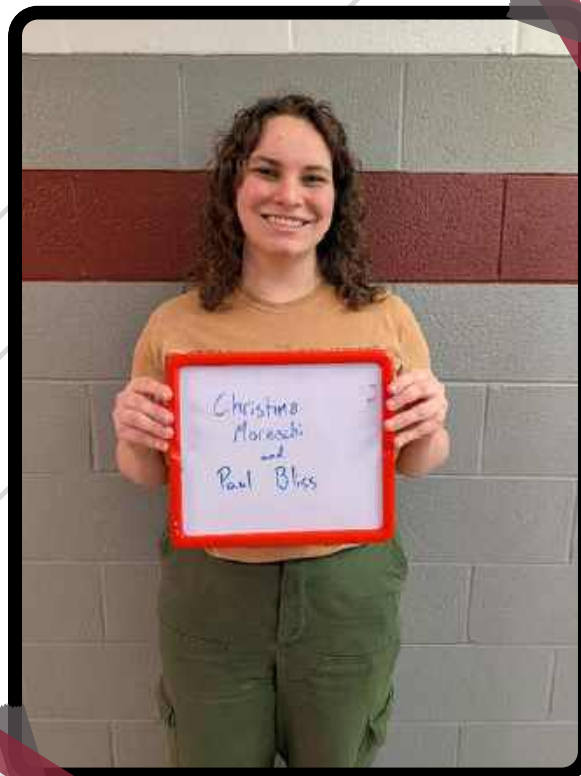
These SAHE Alumni inspired our current first-year students to pursue a degree in student affairs...



Jake Starek



Teresa Kondas



Sonia Yost

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS



AMARA BENDER

SAHE Class of '27

It has been wonderful to work on this issue of *Developments*. As a first year SAHE student it has allowed me to learn more about the program and about our alumni community through creating and editing this issue. I am excited to continue working on the future issues of *Developments*.

CAMERON HORTON

SAHE Class of '26

Things really hit the ground running in your second year with SAHE, that's for sure! It's been great being able to take a bit of a step back through *Developments* and provide updates on all that is happening with the program and what our alumni have been up to. I'm looking forward to what the Spring semester has in store!

